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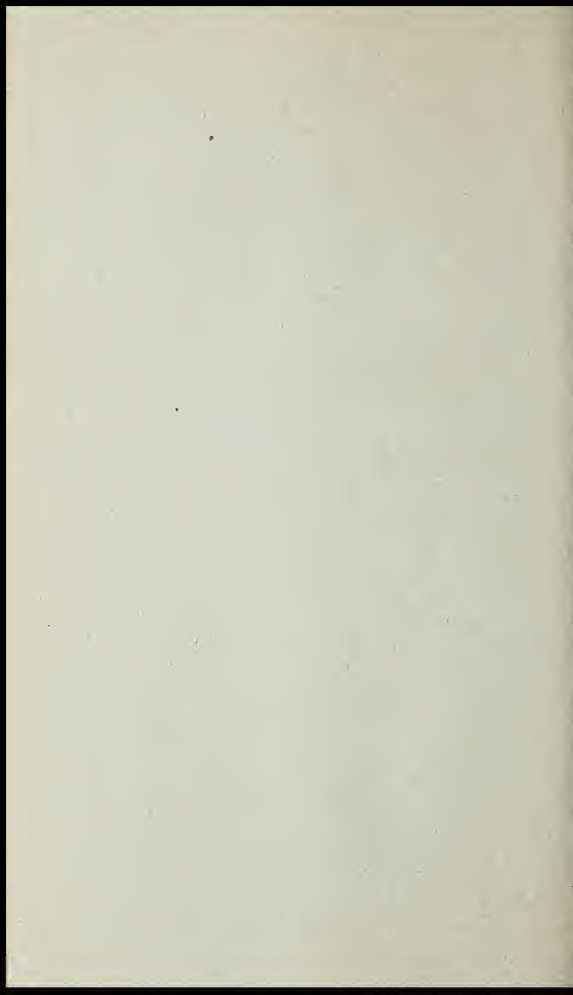
MISSIONS ON CHEQUAMEGON BAY

By JOHN NELSON DAVIDSON, A. M.

Reprinted from Vol. XII., Wisconsin Historical Collections



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If Radisson and Groseilliers, the discoverers in 1659 of the Upper Mississippi,² were not also the first white men who saw Lake Superior, they were the first who have left us an account of extended explorations thereon. According to Neill, the historian of Minnesota, they made in October, 1659, a visit to the "Sault of Lake Superior," and in the spring of the following year they coasted "along a portion of the southeastern shore" of the great lake itself, the "kiji gummi" of the Ojibways. These events occurred while Radisson was on his third "voyage." On Radisson's fourth "voyage," begun in August, 1661, and in which he was again accompanied by his brother-in-law Groseilliers, they followed in their boats the southern shore of Lake Superior until they came to "a point of 2 leagues long and some 60 paces broad." Here they made a portage. "As we came to the other sid we weare in a bay of 10 leagues about." Point and bay now bear the same name, Chequamegon.* "Att

¹ Condensed by the Rev. John N. Davidson (of Milwaukee), from his historical address, July 12, 1892, before the northwest educational conference held on Madelaine island, July 12-13, under the auspices of the Lake Superior Congregational Club. All other foot-notes to this paper are by the author.—ED.

² See *Wis. Hist. Coll.*, xi., pp. 66, 67, 70.

³ I use this conventional orthography, though I do not like it. In the opinion of the Rev. Edward Payson Wheeler, of Ashland, a native of Madelaine island, whose boyhood was spent among the Ojibways, it is peculiarly unfortunate that we get names used by that people in French guise or, rather, under a Frenchified disguise. What seems to me evidence of the correctness of this opinion is found in the changing of "Ojibway" to "Chippeway," and also in the spelling of the name of the bay mentioned above. This, by the Rev. John Clark, native pastor in charge of the Presbyterian mission at Odanah, is pronounced "Ehah-kah-wah-mee kunk," with a de-

the end of this bay we landed. The wild men gave thanks to that wch they worship, we to the God of Gods." Here, for a time, their Indian companions left them. Thereupon, says Radisson, "We went about to make a fort of stakes." This was probably the first structure put up by civilized men in what is now Wisconsin, and, on this same site, in the opinion of the late Lyman C. Draper, was established her first mission.¹ The place of said mission, and so perhaps of the "fort" also, is supposed by some to be at or near the mouth of Whittlesey creek, about three miles from Ashland, and between that city and Washburn.

The founder of this first mission was Father Claude Allouez. French traders who had been at Chequamegon bay invited him to go thither with them, on their return from the lower St. Lawrence. He thus writes: "The eighth day of August, 1665, I embarked at Three Rivers with six Frenchmen, in company with more than four hundred savages of divers nations. The devil formed all opposition imaginable to our voyage, making use of the false prejudice that these Indians have, namely, that baptism causes death to their children. On the second of September we entered into the upper lake, which will hereafter bear the

cided accent on the last syllable. Mr. Wheeler also accents the last syllable, but prefers the pronunciation "Sheh-gu-wah-mi-kung." William Whipple Warren, in whose veins honorably flowed Ojibway blood, writes the name "Chagouamigon," in his "History of the Ojibways" (*Minn. Hist. Coll.*, v., p. 21).

¹Had René Menard not perished (probably by murder), the honor of founding the first mission within the limits of our state would doubtless have been his. It was during the interval between Radisson's third "voyage" and his fourth, that Menard started from the head of Keweenaw bay to seek Hurons near the head waters of the Black river. Abandoned by his lying Indian companions, he waited fifteen days for help which they promised to send him. This delay, it would seem, was beside Lac Vieux Desert. Following the Wisconsin river he came, Verwyst thinks, to a spot near the confluence of the Copper river with the Wisconsin, near the present village of Merrill. It was about the tenth of August, 1661, that this hero of the cross was seen of men no more. See Chrysostom Verwyst's *Missionary Labors of Fathers Marquette, Menard, and Allouez* (Milw., 1896), p. 176.

name of Monsieur Tracy.¹ After having gone a hundred and eighty leagues along that coast of Lake Tracy, which looks towards the south, we arrived on the first day of October, 1665, at Chequamegon. It is a beautiful bay at the head of which is situated the large village of the Indians, who there cultivate fields of Indian corn and do not lead a wandering life. There are at this place men bearing arms who number about eight hundred; but these are gathered together from seven different tribes, and live in peaceable community. * * * The section of the lake shore where we have settled down is between two large villages and is, as it were, the center of all the tribes of these countries; because the fishing here is very good, which forms the principal source of support to these people. We have erected there a small chapel of bark, where my sole occupation is to receive the Algonquin and Huron Christians, instruct them, baptize and catechise the children," etc. The name of the Holy Spirit was given by Allouez to mission, chapel, and place. What Allouez calls "La Pointe d'Esprit" is the wide cape between Chequamegon bay and the western part of Lake Superior.

One reason, apparently, that so many Indians chose the shores of Chequamegon bay as a home was, that there they were at a safe distance from the Iroquois on the east, and supposed themselves to be out of danger from the Sioux on the west. Says one of the writers in the *Jesuit Relations* for 1668 and 1669: "God has found some elect in every tribe during the time in which the fear of the Iroquois has kept them assembled there. But finally the danger having passed, each tribe returned to its own country." However, the Hurons, Ottawas, and perhaps some of the other tribes remained.

In 1667, the year in which Marquette was sent to found a mission at Sault Ste. Marie, Allouez went back to Quebec, arriving there on the third of August. He returned to the mission of the Holy Spirit, where he stayed two years

¹Jean Baptiste Tracy, then intendant of New France. His office was designed by the home government to be a sort of check upon that of the governor.

longer. In 1669 he went again to Quebec, whence he once more came west, this time to establish a mission in the Green Bay region.

James Marquette succeeded Allouez in the mission on Chequamegon bay. This famous missionary and explorer arrived at his new station the thirteenth of September, 1669. "I went," he says, "to visit the Indians, who were living in clearings divided, as it were, into five villages, The Hurons, to the number of four or five hundred souls, are nearly all baptized, and still always preserve a little Christianity." He thus continues: "Those of the Keinouche tribe¹ declare loudly that the time has not yet come [to embrace the Christian religion]. The Outaouacs [Ottawas] seem to harden themselves against the instructions imparted to them. The Kiskakonk nation, which for three years has refused to receive the gospel announced to them by Father Allouez, finally resolved, in the autumn of the year 1668, to obey God. This resolution was taken in a council and declared to the Father who was to winter with them for the fourth time in order to instruct and baptize them. The Father having gone to another mission, the charge of this one was given to me."

At this time the Illinois were living west of the Mississippi. Some of them came to the mission. Marquette gives an account of them, and adds: "When the Illinois come to La Pointe, they pass a great river about a league in width. It runs from north to south, and so far that the Illinois, who know not what a canoe is,² have not heard of its mouth. It is hardly credible that this large river empties [into the sea] at Virginia; and we rather believe it has its mouth in California. If the Indians who have promised to make a canoe do not fail in their word, we shall travel on this river as far as possible." As is well known, this purpose was carried out two years later, when Joliet and Marquette entered the upper Mississippi by the Fox-Wisconsin route, as Radisson and Groseilliers had probably

¹ An Ottawa clan. The name (corrupted into our Kenosha) means the kind of fish known to us as pike.

² Query: How did they cross the river?!

done fourteen years before them. Marquette's stay at Chequamegon bay was a short one. The last account of the mission of the Holy Spirit is in the *Jesuit Relations* for 1671 and 1672. "These quarters of the north have their Iroquois as well as those of the south; there are certain people called Nadouessi [Sioux] who make themselves dreaded by all their neighbors. Our Outaouacs and Hurons had up to the present time kept up a kind of peace with them; but affairs having become embroiled, and some murders even having been committed on both sides, our savages had reason to apprehend that the storm would burst upon them, and judged that it was safer for them to leave the place. They retired to the Lake of the Hurons. Father Marquette was obliged to follow his flock, submitting to the same fatigues and encountering the same dangers with them." The Hurons went to "Missilimackinac," a name then applied not only to the island now called Mackinaw, but also to the mainland north of it. The Ottawas found a home on the island of "Ekaentouton" [Manitoulin]. Under the name of St. Ignatius, Marquette re-established his mission where is now the little city of St. Ignace, Michigan. Here, too, was established a French military post. But after Cadillac founded Detroit in 1701, he withdrew the garrison from St. Ignatius, despite the entreaties of the Jesuits, and prevailed upon many of the Indians to leave. To prevent the desecration of their church by pagan Indians, the priests set fire to it with their own hands, and abandoned the mission.¹

In the "Relation of the Mission of St. Ignatius at Missilimackinac," we find a remark that takes us back to the time before Marquette and his flock left their home on Chequamegon bay. "Some prisoners," we read, "which were made on both sides, were put to death by burning them." In the midst of atrocities like these, beyond his power to prevent, Marquette's stay of two years or less in what is now Wisconsin came to an end in 1671.

But notwithstanding the flight of Hurons and Ottawas from Chequamegon bay, the Sioux (Dakotahs) did not be-

¹ See Parkman's *Half Century of Conflict*.

come permanent masters there. The strong and determined enemies of that tribe, the Ojibways, either had not then arrived thither or could not be displaced. These, according to their own tradition, as recorded by Warren, "first reached Point Sha-ga-waun-ik-ong about 1490. There for many years they concentrated their numbers in one village. They were surrounded by fierce and inveterate enemies whom they denominated the O-dug-aum-eeg (opposite-side people, best known at this day as the Foxes), and the A-boin-ug (or roasters), by which significant name they have ever known the powerful tribe of Dakotas."¹

Pressed by these enemies, the Ojibways removed to the adjacent island of Moningwunakauning (the place of the golden-breasted woodpecker), now called Madelaine. But, through some superstitious fears, increased if not caused by their magicians, commonly called medicine men,—who correspond in many respects to our spirit mediums,—this place was afterwards so utterly abandoned that an Ojibway would scarcely venture to set foot upon it.

¹ The meaning of their own tribal name is suggestive: "To roast till puckered up;" from *o-jib*, "puckered up," and *ab-way*, "to roast." Both names. *Ojibway* and *Aboinug*, probably originated from the practice of putting captives to death by torture with fire. Another name, *Saulteaux* or *Sauteurs*, "the people of the falls," properly used only of those of the Ojibways who remained at the Sault of Lake Superior, is used sometimes apparently of the whole tribe.

Warren, to whom we are indebted for most of these statements concerning the Ojibways, states that the present tribal name has been in use "certainly not more than three centuries, and in all probability much less. It is only in this term of time that they have been disconnected as a distinct or separate tribe from the Ottawas and Potta-wat um-ies. The name by which they were known when incorporated in one body is at the present day uncertain. The final separation of these three tribes took place at the straits of Michilimackinac from natural causes." From these straits, "the Potta-wat um-ies moved up Lake Michigan and by taking with them, or for a time perpetuating, the national fire, which, according to tradition, was sacredly kept alive in their more primitive days, they have obtained the name of 'those who make or keep the fire,' which is the literal meaning of their tribal cognomen. Those who remained eastward of both divisions of their kindred came first in contact with the French and thus, as their name signifies, became the 'Ottawas,' that is, the 'traders.'"

Years later, apparently in 1692 or 1693, the French explorer Le Seuer built some sort of a structure on Madelaine island, probably at the south end of it, a place which was long held by his countrymen. It is the site known now as that of the "old fort."¹ Thus this trading station was one of the oldest in the Wisconsin region. There is no record of continuous occupancy by the French, though doubtless their traders, at least, kept coming and going. But their missionaries came no more to Chequamegon. The last French officer there was Hertel de Beaubassin, who left in 1756, with Ojibways as allies, to join his countrymen in the war then raging between them and the English colonists. Nine years later, when the whole country had passed under the sway of King George, Alexander Henry—the English trader and author who so narrowly escaped with his life at the time of the massacre at (old) Fort Mackinaw,² June 4, 1763—re-established the Madelaine island trading-post. To this place the name of La Pointe was applied some time during the present century, a name afterward transferred to the "new fort" built by the American Fur Company two miles farther north, when, on account of the use of larger vessels in the Lake Superior trade, and the partial filling of

¹ According to Neill, it was at this time that "the Ojibways began to concentrate in a village upon the shores of Chequamegon bay." From E. P. Wheeler, of Ashland, we have the following: "The Ojibways, I think, can not be shown to have known anything about Chequamegon bay before 1660 when, from a point toward Green bay, they were going up there to trade." Neill seems to me to be safer by far to follow than Warren. The second-growth trees, which Mr. Warren instances as showing the early occupation of La Pointe, can easily be accounted for by the fact that in 1762 a French trader was known to have summered there,—not because there were Indians there, but because they were on the opposite side. Following down from 1762 to 1791, when John Johnson summered there, and the Cadottes also came to the island, there were occasional traders who found it safer to trade from over across the channel on La Pointe island, than at Bayfield and vicinity, where the Indians were congregated. These transient traders at La Pointe would account for the second-growth timber which existed at the time of Warren's early recollections as a boy (born 1824).

This old fort was on the south side of the strait.

the old harbor with sand, a new and a deeper one became a necessity. Thus when we see the name La Pointe, we need to remember that it once meant the mainland west of Chequamegon bay, then the southern end of Madelaine island, and last of all the village which now bears it.

From Henry, the trade seems to have passed to the brothers Cadotte. Jean Baptiste and Michel, descendants of one Cadeau, who, it is said, came to the Lake Superior region in 1671, in the company of the French deputy, Simon Francis Daumont, the Sieur de St. Lusson. In that year, at a great gathering of the Indian tribes held at Sault Ste. Marie, St. Lusson formally took possession (June 14) of all this region, — and a good part of the rest of the world, — in the name of his master Louis XIV., king of France.¹

In 1818, a young man, Lyman Marcus Warren, a native of Berkshire county, Massachusetts, came with his younger brother, Truman Abraham, to the Lake Superior region, "to engage in the fur trade. They entered the service of Michel Cadotte and soon became great favorites with the Ojibways." They married daughters of their employer, and succeeded to his trade, which they carried on at first in rivalry to the American Fur Company, but afterward in connection with it. In 1825, Truman A. Warren died while on a voyage from Mackinaw to Detroit. He left a

¹It is evident from the terms of the *procès-verbal* set forth on this occasion, at Sault Ste. Marie, by "Simon François Daumont, Esquire, Sieur de St. Lusson, Commissioner subdelegate of my Lord the Intendant of New France" (Jean Baptiste Talon), that he did not intend that anything should be lost because it had not been claimed. "We take possession of the said place of Ste. Mary of the Falls as well as of Lake Huron and Supérieur, the island of Caientoton [Manitoulin] and of all other Countries, rivers, lakes and tributaries, contiguous and adjacent thereunto, as well discovered as to be discovered, which are bounded on the one side by the Northern and Western Seas and on the other side by the South Sea [Pacific ocean] including all its length or breadth." The ceremony is spoken of in the *Jesuit Relations* as one "worthy of the eldest son of the church and of a most Christian sovereign." Allouez was there and made an address to the Indians concerning the king, in terms which lead us to wonder what more he could have said, had he been speaking of the lord of earth and heaven. See text of the *procès-verbal*, in *Wis. Hist. Coll.*, xi., pp. 26-29.

son, James Henry, who has but lately (October, 1891) retired from a service of twenty-seven years as Congregational home missionary superintendent of California.

To the elder brother, Lyman Marcus, were given more years of life. His eager zeal for the good of the Indians and others with whom he lived led to the establishment of the first mission on Madelaine island. In the summer of 1829, when Mr. Warren made his annual trip to Mackinaw, he took with him a boat for the special purpose of bringing back a missionary. Frederick Ayer returned with him, opened a school, attended at first only by white children, studied the Ojibway language, and, though not yet ordained, served as pastor to both whites and Indians. At that time there was no other mission on Lake Superior.

The next year, the mission was strengthened by the coming of the Rev. Sherman Hall and wife, with an interpreter, Mrs. John Campbell. The mission family left Mackinaw on the fifth of August, 1831, in company with Mr. Warren, and arrived at La Pointe on the thirtieth. Under the former date, Mr. Hall wrote as follows: "The manner of traveling on the upper waters of the great lakes is with open canoes and batteaux. The former are made in the Indian style, the material of which is the bark of the white birch and the wood of the white cedar. The cedar forms the ribbing, and the bark the part which comes in contact with the water. These are made of various sizes, from ten to thirty feet in length. The largest are sufficiently strong to carry from two to three tons of lading. They are propelled with the paddle, and when well built and well manned, without lading, will go from eighty to one hundred miles in a day, in calm weather. Batteaux are light-made boats, about forty feet in length, and ten or twelve feet wide at the center, capable of carrying about five tons' burden each, and are rowed by six or seven men. They have no deck. Upon articles of lading with which the boat is filled, is the place for the passengers, who have no other seats than they can form for themselves out of their traveling trunks, boxes, beds, etc. On these they place themselves in any position which necessity may require or

convenience suggest. Such is the vehicle which is to convey us to the place of our destination. In the small compass of this boat we have to find room for eleven persons. At night our tent is pitched on some convenient place on shore." ¹

This company took care not to travel on the Sabbath. Their first Sunday, the seventh of August, was spent at Sault Ste. Marie, "where they were received with Christian hospitality by the Rev. Abel Bingham, Baptist missionary there." Rev. Jeremiah Porter, so well known in connection with the early history of Chicago, began his work at Sault Ste. Marie this year, but not until about Thanksgiving.

The La Pointe to which the missionaries came, was the "old fort" on the southern end of the island. The first sermon ever delivered in this place by a regularly-ordained Christian minister was by Mr. Hall, in the afternoon of the first Sunday after his arrival. He had held a meeting in the morning, attended by a considerable number of Frenchmen. It is pleasant to read his acknowledgment of "kindness received from Catholic families."

About the first of September the school averaged twenty-five. "The instruction given has been wholly in the English language, on account of our having no books in the language of the natives. Some elementary Indian books are very much needed. A Sabbath-school exercise has been held on Sabbath mornings with the children." Meetings for Indian adults were also held, at which a few verses were often read from a small scripture tract prepared by Dr. James of the United States army. The hymn-book used was one published for the use of the Methodist missions to the Ojibways in Upper Canada.

A mission-house, still standing, but unoccupied, was soon built at La Pointe half-way between the old fort and the new. Besides affording a place for worship and teaching, it became the home of all the Protestant missionaries who labored on the island, one of whom, Mrs. Harriet E. Wheeler, thinks that it was built in 1832.

¹ A batteau of this description can be found in the museum of the Wisconsin State Historical Society.

Again a pioneer of pioneers, Mr. Ayer, in the autumn of 1832, pressed farther into the wilderness on a tour of missionary exploration. He visited Sandy lake and Leech lake. The former, lying on the great portage route from Winnipeg, by way of the St. Louis river, to Lake Superior, has been a noted point on that waterway for two hundred years. Very near the confluence of the lake's short outlet with the Mississippi was the home and trading-post of William Aitkin, for whom a Minnesota county has been named. Mr. Ayer wintered with him, taught school, and finished an Ojibway spelling-book, begun at La Pointe. Early in the spring, with eighty dollars paid by Mr. Aitkin, who also furnished an experienced guide, Mr. Ayer started on foot for Mackinaw, bound for Utica, New York, to get his book printed soon enough to make it possible for him to return to Lake Superior that season with the traders. In those days, it was a journey for a hero, and indeed nearly cost him his life. Once, having broken through the ice, he would have been drowned but for a long pole which prudently he was carrying. Of all books written wholly or in part in Wisconsin, this Ojibway speller is probably the first in point of time.

The missionaries of that time were not strangers to long and hard journeys. Nor were these always undertaken in summer. "It requires an athletic constitution," write Messrs. Hall and Boutwell¹ from La Pointe, February 7,

¹ In the spring of 1832, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft organized an expedition with the purpose of ascertaining the true source of the Mississippi, and making other geographical and scientific discoveries. Accompanying this expedition, the Rev. William Thurston Boutwell came to La Pointe June 20th. Thence the party went westward by way of Fond du Lac (of Lake Superior). The first sermon ever preached at this old trading-post, now a station on the Northern Pacific railway, was by Mr. Boutwell, probably on Sunday, the twenty-fourth of June. "On the following Sabbath the rain and the mosquitoes rendered it impossible for us to have divine service." Under date of the thirteenth of July, Mr. Boutwell wrote: "At 2 p. m. we reached Elk lake, now called Itasca. Before that time, Cass lake had been regarded as the source of the Mississippi. Apparently not satisfied with *omushkōs*, the Ojibway word for "elk," Mr. Schoolcraft sought for the newly-discovered lake what he awkwardly calls a

1835, "to shoulder one's pack and march five or six days in succession through the uninhabited wilderness, perhaps with a pair of snow-shoes on the feet, and at night to encamp in the open air with only a blanket or two for covering." With men who would thus endure hardship in the cause of humanity, the mission was sure to do good work.

The first organization of a Congregational church¹ within the present limits of Wisconsin took place at La Pointe in August, 1833, in connection with this mission. The precise date seems hopelessly to be lost.

A second mission, one of the Roman Catholic communion, was begun by Rev. Frederic Baraga, a native of Austria, who arrived at La Pointe the twenty-seventh of July, 1835. In the year of his arrival he caused to be built what the Rev. Chrysostom Verwyst calls a chapel. Six years later, some logs of this building were used in the construction of the present church, dedicated the first of August, 1841. This is the church over which, in spite of what Messrs. W. W. Warren and Verwyst both have written, some ill-informed people, supposing that it was erected by Father Marquette, indulge in much wasted sentiment.²

"female" name. Not being himself a classical scholar, he asked Mr. Boutwell the Latin words for "true" and "head." As *verus* did not seem to be suited to his purpose, Mr. Schoolcraft took the kindred noun, *veritas*, and from its last two syllables, and the first of *caput*, formed "Itasca."

Mr. Boutwell married a daughter of Ramsey Crooks, of whom we have some account in Irving's *Astoria*. Her mother was of Indian origin. Before her marriage, Mrs. Boutwell was a missionary teacher. While living at Leech lake, in what is now Minnesota, Mr. and Mrs. Boutwell protected from annoying and even dangerous Indians the eminent astronomer, Jean N. Nicollet. Mr. Boutwell died October 11, 1890.

¹ The (Congregational) church among the Stockbridge Indians was organized at Stockbridge, Massachusetts, in 1785, and removed with its people, first to New York and then (1822-29) to the Green Bay region.

² In this church hangs a pleasing though not a great picture, a "Descent from the Cross," probably by some Italian painter or copyist. The story given in some guide books, that this painting was brought to America by Marquette, is most absurd. If it had been in Marquette's mission,—which it will be remembered was not on Madelaine island at all,—he would

Close by the lake shore, on the right hand of the landing-place, stands the church begun in 1837 by the Protestant mission and congregation. According to Captain Angus, there was a difference of only a few days in beginning work on the two buildings, and he does not remember which was begun first. We may anticipate here sufficiently to remark that with the decay of the fur trade and the removal of the Indians to the Odanah reservation, both these churches passed into comparative neglect. However, in the Roman Catholic church, service is now held once in two weeks; and the other has lately, July 12, 1892, become the property in trust of the Lake Superior Congregational Club, and will doubtless be cared for better in the future than it has been in the past.

Perhaps the only translation of the New Testament made in Wisconsin is that by Mr. Hall, assisted by Henry Blatchford, a Chippewa half breed, who has been connected with the mission since 1834. They finished their translation of the Gospel of Luke as early as 1833. Mr. Hall carried on this work of translation until he had made from the Greek an excellent version of the New Testament. In this work he had the advantage of the prior but less accurate translation of Dr. James. In the report concerning the mission, written probably in August, 1836, or sooner, the names are given of five books printed "during the year," apparently under the auspices of the mission. This subject of the creation of a new literature possesses more interest, because of the statement of Warren that "there is no word in the Ojibway language expressive of a profane oath."

doubtless have taken it with him when he and his people were driven to "Missilimackinac." Furthermore, we have the express testimony of Captain John Daniel Angus, still a resident of La Pointe, that he helped unpack this picture among other goods belonging to Father Baraga, when the latter returned to America after spending (so says Captain Angus) the winter of 1840 in Rome. Miss Baraga came at this time with her brother to America, and like him gave up rank and title for missionary service. It may be added that Captain Angus says the picture was given to Father Baraga by the pope.

In 1841, the Rev. Leonard Hemenway Wheeler and wife, Rev. Woodbridge L. James and wife, and Miss Abigail Spooner, came to the La Pointe mission. Mr. and Mrs. James did not long remain. Miss Spooner rendered years of service. It is no disparagement to the other laborers there to say that Mr. Wheeler is the first among equals. "It is safe to say," writes Dr. Edwin Ellis, now county judge of Ashland county, who personally knew him, "that no man was ever more thoroughly devoted to the work of rescuing the Indians from barbarism, and vice, and degradation, than was Mr. Wheeler. His primary object was to preach Christ, but he saw clearly that the Indian must be civilized or exterminated." Mr. Wheeler, believing that for Indians — and white men as well — industry is a necessary part of Christianity, determined to found an agricultural settlement. This he established on the Mushkeezeebi, or Bad river (literally the Marsh river), and named Odanah, an Ojibway word meaning "village." Thither he removed the first day of May, 1845. Mr. Hall remained at La Pointe until 1853, when he removed to Crow Wing on the Mississippi. Before the latter date, Mr. Ayer also had removed to Minnesota, where he became a member of the convention that framed the present constitution of that state.

Among the Indians in the settlement at Odanah, Mr. Wheeler established civil government. He aided in the same service among the whites, holding, after La Pointe county was organized, various offices which increased his responsibilities rather than his income. Nor did he forget the spiritual needs of the whites. He was the first to preach at Ashland, and probably at Bayfield also. "Amid all the trials and discouragements of Ashland's early settlers, he was ever ready to offer words of encouragement and cheer. In its darkest periods he prophesied of Ashland's final success, and his words of cheer were influential in inducing some of us to hold on when otherwise we should have given up in despair. He was a frequent visitor among us in those early days, and his social influence was purifying and ennobling. He participated in the first public celebration ever held in Ashland, July 4,

1856. He was a man of much mechanical ingenuity; and during his residence at Odanah he invented a windmill which has since been patented under the name of the Eclipse windmill, a very useful invention, which is now extensively used all over the United States and Europe." Thus Dr. Ellis wrote, soon after Mr. Wheeler's death.

About 1850, came a determined effort to compel the Indians to remove to the west of the Mississippi. Their annuities for that year were paid at Fond du Lac (of Lake Superior). Mr. Wheeler would not advise the Indians to refuse to do what the government commanded, but he could not conscientiously advise removal. In 1851, the pressure to compel removal was made stronger than before, and Messrs. Hall and Wheeler made a tour of exploration in the country to which it was proposed that the Lake Superior Ojibways should go. They left La Pointe on the fifth of June, and returned on the eleventh of July. Mr. Wheeler returned with the conviction that it would be a deed of mercy on the part of the government to shoot the Indians, rather than send them to the new region assigned them, where they would be exposed to the fury of their relentless enemies, the Sioux.

In 1852, the dismal struggle continued. Under date of July 11, 1853, Mrs. Wheeler thus wrote to her parents from La Pointe: "The last winter was one of the most dreary, lonely and trying ones we have ever spent in the country. The breaking up of the mission here [a prospective result of the removal of the Indians] and the unsettled, confused state of Indian affairs threw a gloom over the future. Often did I flee into my bedroom to hide the tears I could not control. The heat and burden of the day press heavily upon dear husband. He has grown old fast since we returned from the East [where they had been for a rest two years before], and I sometimes look anxiously forward to the future. He is obliged to attend to all the secular affairs of our station, and has charge of the property of the [mission] board here, oversees all our own and the Indians' farming,—giving out their seed, plowing their ground, etc. He is doctor for both places [Odanah and

La Pointe], chairman of the board of county commissioners, besides numberless other things too small to mention perhaps, but which nevertheless break in upon his time and divert his mind from his more appropriate work. To human appearance our people were never in a better condition to profit by the preaching of the gospel. We think there is hardly a possibility of removing them. They are fully determined not to go. They have lived two years without their payments, and find they do not starve or freeze. Indeed I doubt very much whether there is a band of Chippeways beyond the Mississippi, with all their annuities, that are as well fed and clothed as ours are."

To no other period of Mr. Wheeler's life did the following words from Dr. Ellis better apply, than to this time: "When unscrupulous and grasping men were ready to rob and wrong the red men, his watchful eye and sound judgment saw the danger, and, like the old cavalier, without fear and without reproach, he raised his voice and used his pen for their defense. His intercession in their behalf was usually productive of essential good, for those that knew him knew that truth and justice were at his back, and that it was not safe to take up the gauntlet against so unselfish a champion. It was not for himself that he pleaded, but for those who could not defend themselves."

His pleadings were not in vain. There came a change for the better. The payments to the Indians were resumed at La Pointe, and Mr. Wheeler's ideas of justice toward the Ojibway Indians were substantially embodied in a treaty made with them, the thirtieth of September, 1854, by which three reservations were provided for,— at Odanah, where he had made a settlement so many years before, at Lac Court Oreilles, and at Lac du Flambeau. To have the government give the head of each Indian family eighty acres of land, and to induce the Indians to settle upon farms and improve them, were favorite projects with Mr. Wheeler. In short, he anticipated what enlightened public sentiment now demands as the only just and sensible method of dealing with the Indians.

From the first establishment of the mission much was made of school work. But Mr. Wheeler had a more comprehensive plan. In 1859 he succeeded in opening a school into which children could be gathered from wigwam life. For many years, the Odanah boarding-school afforded the best educational facilities that the Wisconsin Ojibways have yet enjoyed. It was judged worthy of governmental recognition and aid.

But with the realization of his cherished hope came an ominous change in Mr. Wheeler's health. A hemorrhage from the lungs, in the spring of 1859, warned him that he must never again sleep out of doors in the bitter cold of a Lake Superior winter night, with the thermometer at twenty-eight degrees below zero. He must take no more journeys that would bring him home with feet bleeding from cuts made by the thongs of his snow-shoes. Yet his work was not done.

The years of the War of Secession were years of anxiety and danger. The little mission church of Odanah made its offering of precious life. The rascality of certain officials, in dealing with the Indians, threatened disturbance. Mr. Wheeler went to warn the government of impending danger. While he was gone, the frightful Sioux outbreak occurred in Minnesota (August, 1862), and an embassy came to stir up his own people to revolt. But these remained loyal to the influence and teaching of the missionaries. They wished even to raise a company to help the Great Father in Washington subdue his enemies, with the particular thought, it may be, of making war upon their own traditional enemies, the Sioux. But it was not thought best that they should engage in warfare, or be led to believe that their Great Father could not do without their help.

After serving these humble people for a quarter of a century, Mr. Wheeler's special labors in their behalf came to an end in October, 1866. The wasting of consumption compelled removal, and left him but six years more of life. These were spent at Beloit, where he was engaged in a manufacturing enterprise, which provided

support for his family, and education for his children. To him the end of life came on the twenty-second of February, 1872. On Sunday, the twenty-fifth, the wasted body of this faithful missionary of the cross was borne beneath the arches of the First Congregational church in Beloit, whence so much precious dust has been carried to the grave. "God buries his workmen, but carries on his work." The great results of all missionary and church work are written only in the Book of Life. But upon the pages of history, even as men write it, there is honorable place for the record of twenty-five years' labor among a once barbarous people, the establishment of civil government among them, the development of improved plans of missionary and educational work, the training of laborers for other fields, the founding of a town, and the establishment of a successful business carried on in the spirit of the Master.

Mr. Wheeler's friend, Bishop Baraga, whose mission also had been transferred to Odanah, and who himself had found with a change in duty a home in northern Michigan, died in 1868. It is doubtless of Bishop Baraga that the late James Parton thus writes in the *Atlantic Monthly* for April of that year: "I have had the pleasure, once in my life, of conversing with an absolute gentleman: one in whom all the little vanities, all the little greedinesses, all the paltry fuss, worry, affectation, haste, and anxiety springing from imperfectly-disciplined self-love,—all had been consumed; and the whole man was kind, serene, urbane, and utterly sincere. This perfect gentleman was a Roman Catholic bishop, who had spent thirty years of his life in the woods near Lake Superior, trying (and failing, as he frankly owned) to convert rascally Chippeways into tolerable human beings. 'I make pretty good Christians of some of them,' said he; 'but *men*? No: it is impossible.'" It would be interesting to know how much this confession of failure has been affected by Mr. Parton's interpretation.

Upon the re-union of the New School and the Old School branches of the Presbyterian church, the Odanah mission, with others, was transferred from the care of the American

Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to that of the Presbyterian Board. The Odanah church was reorganized according to Presbyterian polity on Sunday, August 6, 1876. But the same faithful pastor, Henry Blatchford, already named, remained in charge. When the feebleness of age compelled a change, a successor was found in a native Ojibway, whose parents named him John Clark, in honor of the well-known Methodist missionary and evangelist.

The Roman Catholic mission is also continued, receiving its support out of the munificent gift of Miss Catherine Drexel. It is now perhaps the most prosperous of the two. Its school is on the site where was the one established by Mr. Wheeler. For a time the Presbyterian Board neglected its mission, and even went so far as to sell the valuable property above mentioned.

The Indians are decreasing in number. But the influence of the work done at Odanah has extended to the Indian missions farther to the west and north, and, as we have seen, to the whites whose homes are now on the shores of the beautiful Chequamegon.

¹ The American Board was for many years an inter-denominational organization, representing the (Dutch) Reformed and Presbyterian churches as well as those of the Congregational order. By the withdrawal of the other denominations, the Board has become practically a Congregational body. But it was in the days of united work that the mission on Madeline island was founded and supported by the American Board.



